Congress of Vienna a Good Model to Avoid at Peace Table

By J. L. de Bekker

AFTER the armistice, which in this case spells the unconditional surrender of the Hun war machine, comes the congress at which details of the peace are to be determined by the victors and imposed upon the vanquished.

Where shall it be held? Speculative comment based on information from an authoritative source indicated last week, according to The Tribune, that Washington was America's first choice and the second choice of several of the Allies. France, for obvious reasons, would prefer Versailles, and there would be ironic justice in shearing from the Hohenzollern the insignia of world power in the place where he first strutted as imperial majesty.

Who will attend? There is precedent for saying that the chiefs of state of all the Allies will be present in person, for a time at least, although the actual work will be performed by the premiers or diplomatic representatives of the highest rank.

With the conditions of the peace the vanquished have nothing to do. It is theirs to accept and obey, unless they are sufficiently adroit to create a breach between the nations, which may easily have learned by now that only by unity of purpose and command was the triumph of arms possible; that only by perfect accord can the peace be made lasting.

No less skilful in negotiation than in arms, it is only at the peace table that the Hun is still to be feared. Always, except in dealing with the first Napoleon, Prussia has emerged with gains. This is the secret of her growth from the petty Marquisate of Brandenburg to so commanding a position that for a time her dream of world dominion by brute force seemed possible of realization. Now that she cannot hope to gain, she will strive to minimize her losses, to adjust herself to new conditions, as France did at the Congress of Vienna, following the overthrow of Napoleonic rule.

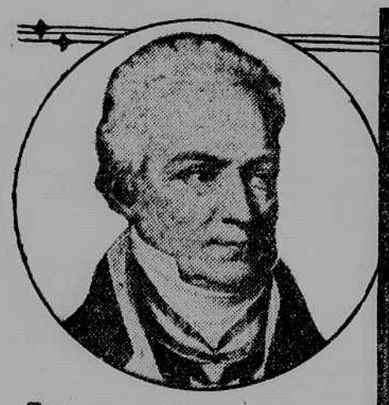
But where France succeeded there is reason to hope that Prussia will fail. France had Talleyrand to direct her diplomacy. Where will Prussia match him? With Hohenlohe, presumed to be still sulking in Switzerland? With Lichnowsky, the too truthful Pole?

Either of these men, had they been heeded five years ago, might have been able to prevent the greatest catastrophe in the history of civilization and the ruin of their country. Solitary figures, they have been held up to the scorn of Mitteleuropa, and the respect in which they are held by civilized humanity is tempered by the knowledge that anything they might agree to as plenipotentiaries would be regarded by the Junkers as scraps of paper.

But as the unique exemplar of what is to come, wherever the peace conference is to be held, no matter who is to sit at table, people are turning to-day to the records of the Congress of Vienna, and its aftermath, the Holy Alliance.

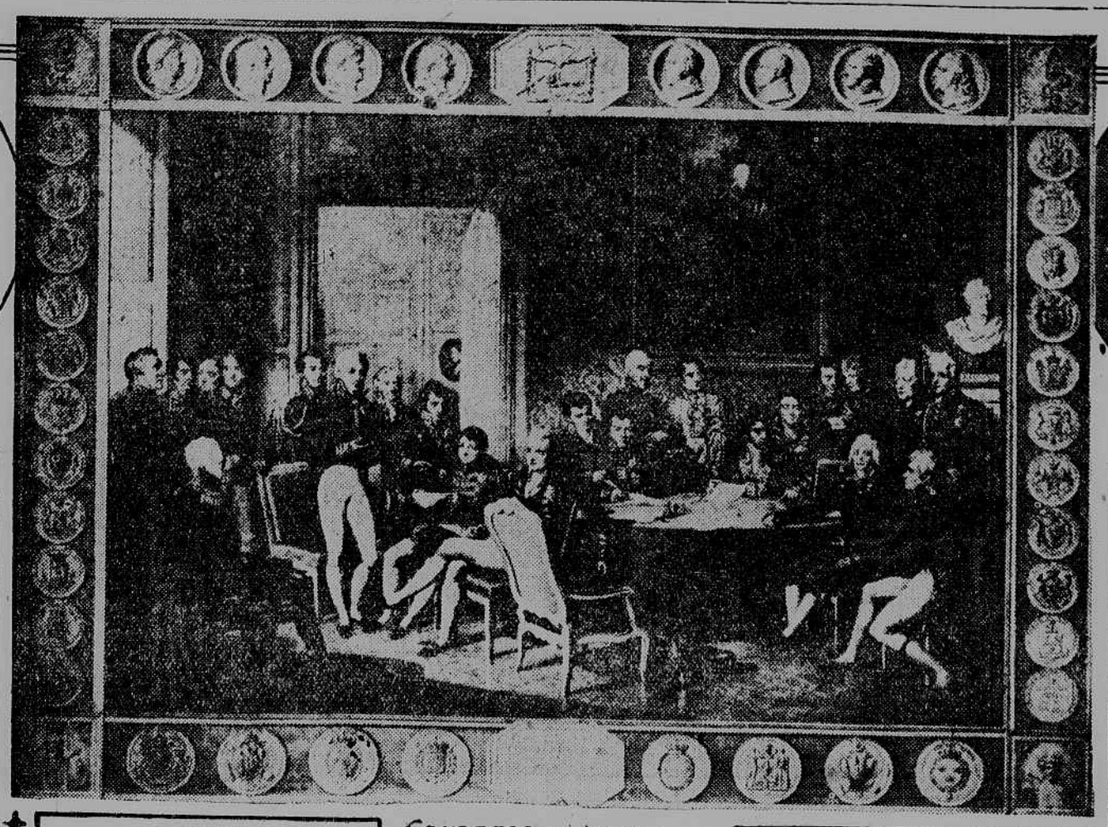
Truly an œcumenical gathering was this congress, and the Holy Alliance which grew from it. Its theology was far from taking on the tinge of Anglicanism, which, as the witty bishop said, "has nothing to do with politics or religion," for it combined both. Yet never was there a gathering of the mighty men of the earth which might more truly have repeated, in the words of the Anglican ritual: "We have left undone the things we ought to have done; we have done the things we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us."

Dynastic rights, balance of power, the divinity that doth hedge a king; cant, humbug and hypocrisy—these were cardinal principles evolved by the powers that overthrew the first Napoleon. Nationality, representative government, reparation and guarantees for the future, are things now to be demanded.

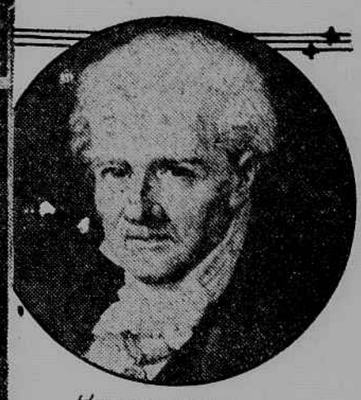


BARON VON HARDENBERG

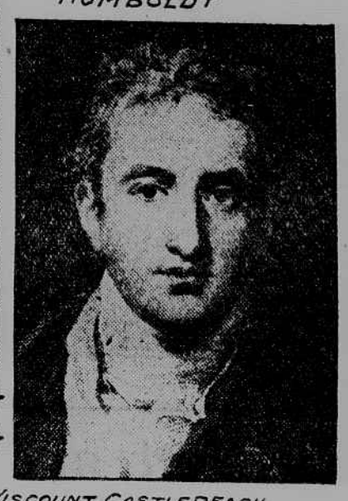
TALLEYRAND



CONGRESS OF VIENNA



HUMBOLDT



VISCOUNT CASTLEREACH

Napoleon Had Gone to Elba

The Congress of Vienna assembled in September, 1814. The "Corsican Ogre," as the English called him, was no longer Emperor of the French, but Emperor of Elba. The King of Rome, "L'Aiglon," and Maria Luisa, his mother, were under the protection of the Hapsburg, who had more than once called upon his "dear son-in-law" for help, but now felt disgraced by the misalliance into which his daughter had been forced; was somewhat disposed to shut her up in a convent, and later winked at her left-handed marriage with a mere Austrian noble. All the world rejoiced that carnage was at an end and that the time had come when a league of nations would make a repetition of such a calamity unthinkable.

Came to Vienna the Czar Alexander of Russia, stately in presence, liberal in spirit, by far the noblest of Napoleon's foes. His was the dominating figure. Came also the Prussian King, who had crawled before the Corsican and had sent the beautiful Louisa, vainly as it proved, to intercede for him. Followed the kings of Denmark, of Bavaria, of Wurttemberg, and all of the margrafs, burgrafs, princes, dukes—all who survived of 300 sovereigns and proprietors of states of the Holy Roman Empire who could beg or borrow the money with which to make the journey—all eager to share in the spoils, to obtain new recognition of their divine rights as petty tyrants.

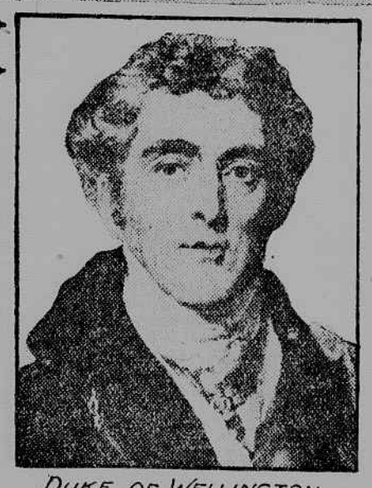
Delegates to the congress itself, overshadowed by imperial and royal majesties and highnesses, to say nothing of serenities and other "hochwollgeboren," were Metternich, the leading Austrian statesman of his generation; Talleyrand, bishop, terrorist, diplomat, a prince by the grace of Napoleon, but always ready to sell him out in accordance with the highest patriotic ideals; Castlereagh, much jeered at by the wits and poets of Britain; Wellington, the greatest English general Ireland ever produced; Fürst Hardenburg and Savant Humboldt, both devoted to their Prussian master, and Count Nesselrode, spokesman for the Russian Czar, and a great name in those days, since immortalized by a pudding. Came none to represent the masses who had shed their blood and spent their hoardings to unbuild the empire of Napoleon; nor those who had risked their lives and their savings to destroy it.

It was a vast and notable gathering, given to relaxing the cares of state with such diversions and feastings and hard drinkings as Vienna well knew how to provide. There was much talk, but the months dragged along without achievement.

"The Congress of Vienna does not walk, but it dances," said the Prince de Ligne, the keenest observer, the wittiest, and the finest gentleman of all the grand seigneurs of his day.

Soon it was not to walk, but run. Meantime, for the resettlement of Europe a thousand compromises were offered.

Czar Alexander, wiser than his fellow sovereigns, wished to reconstitute the Polish state.



DUKE OF WELLINGTON

NAPOLEON

THE PRINCE OF METTERNICH

Matternich, accepting the witticism that the Holy Roman Empire Napoleon had destroyed was "neither holy, Roman nor an empire," wished to substitute for it a "Confederation of the Sovereign Princes and Free Towns of Germany" (which is what it really was), with the Hapsburgs as its hereditary chiefs.

Prussia, originally the Braulenburg marquisate on the northern border of Saxony, wished to grab that kingdom, which, she pointed out, had remained faithful to Napoleon, while she, Prussia, had been glad to strike the tyrant. The facts, were, of course, that Prussia had been willing to black the Corsican's boots until such time as she could knife him in the back; but it was not the rôle of Austria to point this out. There was the King of Rome, living proof of Austria's former regard for the fallen despot.

The one thing upon which all were agreed was that France should be rendered powerless and stripped of every bit of land she had taken by force of arms.

Talleyrand Could Speak on Both Sides

Talleyrand, who had lied glibly for Bonaparte, could prevaricate for Bourbon, his new master. By making the victors quarrel among themselves, he sought to save France.

Eventually territorial readjustments were worked out along these lines:

Holland and Belgium were to be united to form a barrier against France to the north. Swiss neutrality was to be guaranteed; Italy was again divided, the Republic of Genoa being given to Sardinia, and Venetia to Austria in compensation for the Spanish Netherlands, now to form part of the kingdom of Holland; wicked Saxony was punished by giving half her lands to virtuous Prussia, and Prussia was further rewarded by augmenting her territories on the Rhine; Russia, abandoning her plans for a Polish state, took the greater part of the Duchy of Warsaw, all that had been left free by the third partition of the ancient republic, and also relieved Sweden of responsibility for Finland, giving her Norway instead, and permitting the dual kingdom to crown Bernadotte, once Napoleon's marshal, as king; Britain kept the Dutch and French colonies she had seized.

The congress, apparently, had ceased to dance, and begun to march. It put itself on record as against slavery, and in favor of the free navigation of international rivers, such as the Rhine and the Danube. Then it ran.

The "Corsican Ogre" escaped from Elba, was embraced by the Bourbon legions sent to capture him, and bade fair to rule the world again. There followed the Hundred Days, then Waterloo, then Napoleon's second abdication, dated Paris, June 22, 1815. Nominally, the Congress of Vienna had been in session from September, 1814, until June, 1815. Actually it ceased to function when Napoleon resumed the reins of government and did not reassemble after his final exile.

It had laid the social discontent of the dethroned petty princes by conferring upon them grandiose titles and special privileges; it had made the barons of the old empire into counts, and the counts into princes; it had sown the seed of future revolution in Poland, Finland, Belgium, Italy, Norway. It had carefully conserved, where possible, the rights of the major dynasties, divided the swag among the powers big enough to insist upon their share, but except for its impotent pronunciamento regarding slavery, had paid not the slightest regard to the masses of humanity, who were disposed of by arbitrary methods, as usual, and without the formality of asking their advice and consent.

Now Came the Holy Alliance

The Corsican safely caged in St. Helena, the heaven-sent sovereigns of Europe assembled in Paris, where, September 14, old style, September 26, new, 1815, the Holy Alliance was proclaimed, thereafter to be commonly referred to by the major portion of mankind as the "Unholy Alliance." This alliance, wholly reactionary, and meant to fasten autocracy upon the peoples, who had sensed some glimmerings of freedom in the brighter days of the French Revolution, began with a preamble which, for hypocrisy and cant, for asumed intimacy with God Almighty, even Wilhelm II has not been able to improve upon:

"In the name of the Most Holy and Indivisible Trinity: Holy Alliance of Sovereigns of Austria, Prussia and Russia. Their Majesties the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia, having . . . acquired the intimate conviction of the necessity of settling the steps to be observed by the powers in their reciprocal relations upon the sublime truths which the Holy Religion of Our Saviour teaches: They solemnly declare that the present act has no other object than to publish, in the face of the whole world, their first resolution, both in the administration of their respective states and in their political relations with every other government, to take for their sole guide the precepts of that holy religion, namely the precepts of Justice, Christian Charity and Peace.

"The three allied princes looking upon themselves as merely delegated by Providence to govern three branches of one family, namely, Austria, Prussia and Russia, thus confessing that the Christian world, of which they and their peoples form a part, has in reality no sovereign other than Him to whom alone power really belongs."

To this remarkable document, with more or less speed, the following governments then became signatory: Naples, Sardinia, France, Spain. His Royal Highness the Prince Regent of Great Britain, etc., sent his approval, although he did not become a party to the Alliance.

Perhaps enough has been said to show how disregard of national aspirations and of such human rights as are set forth in America's Declaration of Independence may preserve through the deliberations of a peace conference all the elements of discord necessary for a century's future embroilments of humanity. The Congress of Vienna and the Holy Alliance are, at any rate, well worth the careful study of those public servants charged with avoiding such dangers in the light of three generations of almost constant warfare.

Mr. Galsworthy Compares British and American Manners

BRITONS at times have a vast and pleasant candor about themselves that reflects the persistent desire for truthfulness animating the British spirit. We haven't always coincided with what literary observers like Dickens and Kipling and Bennett and Wells have said about us, but when the novelists describe their own England, we turn open ears. Here is Galsworthy on both of us, the English and ourselves, and he approaches fearlessly some of the things that in a bloody and sacrificial war we have been willing to forget, some of the peculiarities of both sides of the Anglo-Saxon group that each side has still to understand in the other. On that understanding, Galsworthy says in "The Yale Review," the future happiness of nations depends more than on any other cause.

"I have never held a whole-hearted brief for the British character. There is a lot of good in it, but much which is repellent. It has a kind of deliberate unattractiveness, setting out on its journey with the words: 'Take me or leave me.' One may respect a person of this sort, but it's difficult either to know or to like him. I am told that an American officer said recently to a British staff officer in a friendly voice: 'So we're going to clean up Brother Boche together!' and the British staff officer replied: 'Really!' No wonder Americans sometimes say: 'I've got no use for those fellows.' The world is consecrate to strangeness and discovery, and the attitude of mind concreted in that 'Really!' seems unforgivable, till one remembers that it is manner rather than matter which divides the hearts of American and Briton.

"In a huge, still half-developed country, where every kind of national type and habit comes to run a new thread into the rich tapestry of American life and thought, people must find it almost impossible to conceive the life of a little old island where traditions persist generation after generation without anything to break them up; where blood remains undoctored by new strains; demeanor becomes crystallized for lack of contrasts, and manner gets set like a plaster mask. The English manner of to-day, of what are called the classes, is the growth of only a century or so. There was probably nothing at all like it in the days of Elizabeth or even of Charles the Second. The English manner was still racy when the inhabitants of Virginia, as we are told, sent over to ask that there might be dispatched to them some hierarchical assistance for the good of their souls, and were answered: 'D—n your souls, grow tobacco!'

"But this British self-consciousness is no mere fluffy gaucherie, it is our special form of what Germans would call Kultur. Behind every manifestation of thought or emotion, the Briton retains control of self, and is thinking: 'That's all I'll let them see'; even: 'That's all I'll let myself feel.' This stoicism is good in its refusal to be foundered; bad in that it fosters a narrow outlook; starves emotion, spontaneity, and frank sympathy; destroys grace and what one may describe roughly as the lovable side of personality. The English hardly ever say just what comes into their heads. What we call 'good form,' the unwritten law which governs certain classes of the Briton, savors of the dull and glacial; but there lurks within it a core of virtue. It has grown up like callous shell round two fine ideals—suppression of the ego lest it trample on the corns of other people; and exaltation of the maxim: 'Deeds before words.' . . .

"A Frenchman, André Chevrillon, whose book, 'England and the War,' I commend to anyone who wishes to understand British peculiarities, used these words in a recent letter: 'You English are so strange to us French, you are so utterly different from any other people in the world.' Yes! We are a lonely race. Deep in our hearts, I think, we feel that only the American people could ever really understand us. And being extraordinarily self-conscious, perverse, and proud, we do our best to hide from Americans that we have any such feeling. It would distress the average Briton to confess that he wanted to be understood, had anything so natural as a craving for fellowship or for being liked. . . . There is something touching and terrifying about our character, about the depth at which it keeps its real yearnings, about the perversity with which it disguises them, and its inability to show its feelings. We are, deep down, under all our lazy mentality, the most combative and competitive race in the world, with the exception perhaps of the American.

"This is at once a spiritual link with America, and yet one of the great barriers to friendship between the two peoples. We are not sure whether we are better men than Americans. Whether we are really better than French, Germans, Russians, Italians, Chinese or any other race, is, of course, more than a question, but those peoples are all so different from us that we are bound, I suppose, secretly to consider ourselves superior. But between Americans and ourselves under al' differences there is some mysterious deep kinship which causes us to doubt, and makes us irritable, as if we were continually being tickled by that question: Now, am I really a better man than he? Exactly what proportion of American blood at this time of day is British I know not; but enough to make us definitely cousins—always an awkward relationship. We see in Americans a sort of image of ourselves; feel near enough, yet far enough, to criticise and carp at the points of difference. It is as though a man went out and encountered, in the street, what he thought for the moment was himself, and, wounded in his *amour-propre*, instantly began to disparage the appearance of that fellow.

"Probably community of language rather than of blood accounts for our sense of kinship, for a common means of expression cannot but mould thought and feeling into some kind of unity. One can hardly overrate the intimacy which a common literature brings. . . .

"The American and Briton, especially the British townsman, have a kind of bone-deep defiance of Fate, a readiness for anything which may turn up, a dry, wry smile under the blackest sky, and an individual way of looking at things, which nothing can shake. Americans and Britons both, we must and will think for ourselves, and know why we do a thing before we do it. We have that ingrained respect for the individual conscience which is at the bottom of all free institutions. Some years before the war an intelligent and cultivated Austrian who had lived long in England was asked for his opinion of the British. 'In many ways,' he said, 'I think you are inferior to us; but one great thing I have noticed about you which we have not. You think and act and speak for yourselves.' If he had passed those years in America instead of in England he must needs have pronounced the same judgment of Americans. . . .

"Under the pressure of this war there is, beneath the lip service we pay to democracy, a disposition to lose faith in it because of its undoubted weakness and inconvenience in a struggle with states autocratically governed; there is even a sort of secret reaction to autocracy. On those lines there is no way out of a future of bitter rivalries, chicanery and wars, and the probable total failure of our civilization. The only cure which I can see lies in democratising the whole world and removing the present weaknesses and shams of democracy by education of the individual conscience in every country. Goodby to that chance if Americans and Britons fall foul of each other, refuse to pool their thoughts and hopes and to keep the general welfare of mankind in view. They have got to stand together, not in aggressive and jealous policies, but in defence and championship of the self-helpful, self-governing, 'live and let live' philosophy of life."

Shaw Says Sir Edward Carson Is a Home Ruler!

By George Bernard Shaw

An interview with Sir Edward Carson, the Ulster leader, was submitted to George Bernard Shaw for his comment. This is what he wrote:

THIS interview is unintentionally funny. The interviewer asks Sir Edward Carson questions about modern literature: about George Moore and George Bernard Shaw. He might as well have addressed such questions to King William III. Sir Edward Carson has never read "The Untilled Field"; and if by any miracle he could be induced to read the preface to "John Bull's Other Island" he would turn his face to the wall and die.

It must be very difficult for an American to conceive how ignorant, not merely of modern literature, but of modern political science, a member of the British House of Commons can be even after a lifetime spent in it, on its front benches. Politics there means simply electioneering as a move in the party game. Harder still is it to realize that a man may achieve a leading position at the British bar and know absolutely nothing of constitutional law. It is plain from Sir Edward Carson's first answer—the all important one—that the Irish question is to him what it is to a child saying its lessons out of a "Little Arthur's History of England"; that is, a question of whether Ireland and England are to be separate, independent, foreign kingdoms or exactly what they are at present. His answer has no sense or any other basis, and it is on this childish assumption that he has organized armed rebellion and sought the assistance of Germany, with the effect of destroying the authority and prestige of parliamentary institutions in England and convincing the Kaiser that the British Empire, confronted with a civil war in Ulster, would not fight. What can one say but "Sancta Simplicitas!"

Home Rule for Ireland is not Separation: it is the alternative to Separation. The advocates of Separation fiercely oppose the Home Rule party, and, like Sir Edward Carson, raise armed forces to defy the British Parliament. They say of Home Rule exactly what Sir Edward Carson says, "We won't have it."

Sir Edward Carson cannot conceive two parliaments in what he calls "the heart of the empire" without social, financial and economic disaster, constant friction and ultimate secession. He does not know that the constant friction generated by the attempt to govern the British Empire from London has long since been relieved by the creation of several parliaments in British North America, several parliaments in Australasia and a parliament in South Africa, and that this war has proved that these parliaments and their constituencies have rallied enthusiastically to the empire in its day of need, while Ireland, Egypt and India are thorns in its side, and ironical contradictions to its professions of democratic good faith.

Please remark that Sir Edward Carson's ignorance as to the political constitutions of the empire he champions is not an affectation, like his innocence as to the question about the morality imposed by the Irish priesthood. No statesman would compromise himself by an exhibition of political ignorance before the American public if he really knew any better. Sir Edward knows just one thing more than the apprentices who shut the gates of Derry against James II; and that is that the United States have separated themselves (no doubt, in his opinion, temporarily, regrettably, and rebelliously) from Great Britain. And he cannot draw the moral even of that.

In the end, as might be expected, Sir Edward Carson turns out to be a Home Ruler. Like Sir Horace Plunkett, he wants an Irish Cabinet to advise the Irish Executive and to frame schemes for the British Parliament. But how on earth is he to have an Irish Cabinet without an Irish Parliament? And why should he swallow the one and strain at the other? It is like demanding an Irish king while insisting on an English beadle. Let Sir Edward think out his scheme for five minutes with competent expert advice, and he will see that his Irish Cabinet—not, observe, an Ulster Cabinet, but an *Irish* Cabinet—will land him in a far more complete scheme of Home Rule than the wretched makeshifts of Gladstone or Mr. Asquith.

The only solution of the Irish question that will bear examination for half an hour is the American one; that is, the federation of the three nations (four, if you count the Welsh), with Ireland in it on the same terms as England and Scotland. England suffers severely from the lack of Home Rule and of an English Parliament. So does Scotland; and, what is more, Scotland knows it. All three nations suffer from the fact that their common Parliament, which is neither Irish, English nor Scotch, is nobody's Parliament. It is too much cumbered with local business and local representatives to attend to its imperial business, and too much distracted by the consequences of its neglect of its imperial business to attend to its local business. It pretends to understand both and understands neither. It is pompous, windy, ignorant, despised and *found out*. What Dickens knew about it fifty years ago the world knows now. Sir Edward will sit in an Irish parliament yet, if only for the generosity and public spirit with which he refrained from exploiting the rising of Easter, 1916, for party purposes in Parliament. But I hope he will take a course at the London School of Economics and Political Science first. What is good enough for Westminster will not be good enough for College Green.